Shifting of small and marginal farmers from agriculture

3655. SHRI THANGA TAMIL SELVAN: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware of the fact that small and marignal farmers and agricultural labourers are shifting to other professions due to indebtedness;

(b) if so, whether any survey/study has been conducted to ascertain the reasons and the enormity of such shifting from agriculture; and

(c) the steps taken by Government to encourage farmers to carry on with their farming activity?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) and (b) As per the 59th round survey of National Sample Survey Organisation NSSO) conducted for the reference period July 2002 to June 2003, at the all-India level, 60% of farmer households reported that they liked farming as a profession while the remaining 40% were of the opinion that, given a choice, they would take up some other career. Forty percent of the farmer households who did not like farming included 27% who did not find it profitable, 8% who thought it was too risky and 5% farmers disliked farming because of its lack of social status and other reasons.

(c) Government is implementing a number of schemes for development of the Agriculture, Horticulture and Livestock sectors and thereby to make agriculture more remunerative and attractive. The strategies formulated by the Government for making the agriculture sector more vibrant and dynamic so as to increase its production and productivity with resultant increase in the income of farmers include (i) enhancing institutional credit flow to the farmers and strengthening of cooperative credit structure; (ii) ensuring the timely availability of quality inputs; (iii) promoting farmer friendly, demand driven agriculture extension system; (iv) accelarating diversification to high value crops including horticulture activities; (v) strengthening infrastructure and the supply chain; (vi) optimizing the efficient utilization of available water resources through micro irrigation and enhancing the sustainability of dry-land/rain fed farming system; (vii) reforming agricultural markets, and widespread use of post harvest technology; and (viii) putting in place a broader spectrum of risk management apparatus for farmers.

In addition to the Minimum Support Price for major crops for providing price support to the farmers, the Government is also implementing Market Intervention Scheme (MIS) on the request of a State/UT Government for procurement of agricultural and horticultural commodities generally perishable in nature and not covered under Minimum Support Price Scheme. Further, crop insurance is also provided to the farmers. The National Agriculture Insurance Scheme is available to all the farmers irrespective of the size of their holding. It envisages coverage of all the food crops, oilseeds and commercial/horticulture crops.

Drought in Vidarbha

†3656. SHRI DATTA MEGHE: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Government of Maharashtra has submitted any plan to the Central Government to tackle the situation of acute drought in Vidarbha region;

(b) if so, the action taken by Government to solve the problem of drought there; and

(c) the long term policy being formulated by Government to deal with such situation of frequent droughts?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA): (a) to (c) The primary responsibility for taking necessary measures in the wake of natural calamities including drought is that of the State Governments concerned. This year, no intimation regarding drought nor any request for Central assistance for drought relief has so far been received from the Government of Maharashtra, including Vidarbha region.

Package for second green revolution

3657. DR. VIJAY MALLYA : Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the 7 point package for Second Green Revolution that was announced by the Hon'ble Prime Minister recently at Hyderabad;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.